



U.S. Department of Labor  
Bureau of Labor Statistics

**Release of the Combined  
2000 NLSY79 Main/Work  
History Data**

Researchers can now obtain the NLSY79 main and work history data as a single release. This release includes information gathered during the 19 interviews of the NLSY79 cohort conducted since 1979. Since 1994, NLSY79 respondents have been interviewed every other year. Round 19 encompasses the year 2000 interviews, which collected information from 8,033 members of the NLSY79 cohort, or almost 81 percent of the eligible respondents.

The work history data are a special set of created variables tracking respondents' employment status from January 1, 1978, through the most recent interview date. Data include each respondent's labor force status (including any military experience) during each week since January 1, 1978, the usual number of hours worked each week at all jobs, and additional identifiers that track respondents who worked for more than one employer simultaneously in any week. The data file also includes start and stop dates for the jobs and usual hours worked for each of up to five employers for whom the respondent worked during the survey period. Data on rate of pay, occupation, industry, and class of worker also are included. Dates of active military service and variables detailing gaps in employment are provided.

In addition, the data set includes constructed variables summarizing various aspects of the respondents' labor force participation. These include number of weeks spent working, unemployed, or out of the labor force and number of hours worked, both during the previous calendar year and during the period since the last interview. The data set also includes variables that summarize the respondent's life-

time experiences in the labor force, such as the number of jobs ever held.

**Changes found on the merged  
release**

The 1979-2000 release marks the first time that the work history arrays and created data are combined with the main public data. While the created data are identical to those produced for past work history releases, the integration of these data with the main release creates a number of positive changes in structure and access aimed at facilitating use of these widely used data.

Users will find that variables previously unique to the work history data file now are located in a number of work history "areas of interest" and are completely integrated into the main data set. (Areas of interest are groupings of variables by common topics. See table 1 for a listing of work history areas of interest.) This change allows researchers to access work history variables using the same Investigator search and extraction software used for the main data set.

Another change results from the fact that the previously separate release of the main and work history data files required duplication of many commonly used employment-related and demographic vari-

ables. The combination of the two data sets eliminates the need for this duplication. These "straight pickup" items, such as occupation, industry, sex, and birth year, are included only once in the combined data set. (See "Variables picked up from the NLSY79 main data file," appendix 18 of the *1979-2000 NLSY79 Codebook Supplement*, for a list and descriptions of these items.) Beginning with the NLSY79 1979-2002 round 20 data release, the "straight pickup" items will be assigned a secondary "Work history" area of interest, so that users will be able to more easily identify all variables (unique work history-only items and "straight pickup" main data items) that were included on the previously separate work history releases.

Prior to the round 19 release, researchers wanting to use main release data not included in the work history release were required to perform separate extractions from each data set and merge the extracted data files. An additional benefit of integrating the two sets of data is that the merging of separate extracts of main and work history data is no longer necessary.

Users should be aware that two sets of main data items that were combined on the work history-only releases are in their original uncombined form on the round 19

**Table 1. NLSY79 work history areas of interest**

WORK HISTORY	HOURS WORKED WORK HISTORY
CALENDAR YEAR WORK HISTORY	JOBS WORK HISTORY
DUAL JOBS WORK HISTORY	MILITARY WORK HISTORY
GAPS BETWEEN JOBS WORK HISTORY	SINCE LAST INTERVIEW WORK HISTORY
HISTORY WORK HISTORY	WEEKLY LABOR STATUS

merged main/work history release. Prior work history releases included HOURSWEK (hours usually worked per week at job #XX) and PREVEMP (employer number of job #XX in previous survey year) variables for each job. For many survey years, these items were developed by combining two or three variables from the main data file. Users who need to use these combined variables in round 19 must create the variables themselves. Formulas for recreating the two types of variables are shown in table 2. These formulas use round 19 (2000) and round 14 (1992) reference numbers, respectively, as examples. Beginning with the round 20 release, these items will be created by the survey staff and included in the combined main/work history release.

Researchers who use within-job and between-job gap variables should be aware that these variables have changed slightly. Formerly, these variables were produced specifically for the work history data set and contained the correct number of non-interview (-5) codes. However, due to data structure changes, the versions of these variables contained on the combined main/work history release do not contain non-interview codes. To recode these items, researchers should use the "reason for non-interview" variables for the appropriate survey years and recode the items being used to "-5" where the reason for non-interview is greater than 0. The "reason for non-interview" variables can be found in the COMMON area of interest.

Since the round 15 release, which contained data up through the 1993 interviews, the main data release has included a unique employer identification number (ID) consisting of the survey year and the employer number in that survey year for each employer. This unique employer ID remains constant from year to year and can facilitate the linking of employers and employer characteristics through survey years. The merged main/work history data release allows these variables to be more easily used in conjunction with the work history jobs data.

Users should note that these unique employer IDs exist only for the recent employers of respondents who were still eligible for interview by the 1993 survey year. Respondents in the dropped military sample and the disadvantaged nonblack/non-Hispanic oversamples do not have

**Table 2. Formulas for creating combined single-item versions of HOURSWEK and PREVEMP**

```

1988-2000 (reference numbers from 2000);
HRSWK1=-4; DO;
IF (R65797.00 NE -4) THEN HRSWK1=R65797.00;
ELSE IF (R65782.00 NE -4) THEN HRSWK1=R65782.00;
ELSE IF (R65550.00 EQ -4) THEN HRSWK1=-4;
ELSE HRSWK1=-3; END;

1980-1992 (reference numbers from 1992);
IF R39456.00>-4 THEN PREVEMP1=R39456.00;
ELSE PREVEMP1=R39457.00;

```

unique IDs computed for their employers. Likewise, employers reported in prior rounds by still-eligible respondents do not have unique IDs if they were not recent enough to be included on the 1993 information sheet. Survey administrators anticipate the creation and release of unique employer IDs for all remaining historical employers and for employers reported by respondents in the dropped sample types for the round 21 data release.

#### How to order the main file/work history data

Researchers interested in obtaining the merged main file/work history data via free download should visit <http://www.bls.gov/nls> and choose the "Ordering Data" link. Much of the supporting documentation also is available for download from this Web site.

The data also are available on compact disc for a \$20 fee. Users interested in purchasing the data CD-ROM, or those with questions, should contact NLS User Services. (See the back of this newsletter for contact information.) □

#### New Male Fertility Data Set Offers Research Opportunities

For years the NLSY79 has provided researchers with a great deal of information on female respondents' fertility patterns. There is now a new male fertility and relationship file, which is designed to help researchers better understand divorce,

paternity, and other topics. This file is based on input from all male respondents in the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 (NLSY79), and was created by The Center for Human Resource Research at The Ohio State University with financial support from a National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) grant.

The NLSY79, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, initially included a nationally representative sample of 12,686 respondents who were between the ages of 14 and 21 at the beginning of 1979. Of these respondents, 6,403 were men. The sample included an overrepresentation of African-Americans and Hispanics. Annual interviews were completed with a substantial majority of the male respondents between 1979 and 1994. Biennial interviews have been completed since that period. Over the years, the interviews, which cover a wide range of topics, have explored the family experiences, employment, education, and related behaviors and attitudes of the respondents.

The surveys have gathered information on the fertility experiences of the cohort's male respondents on a continuing basis. At the most basic level, there have been periodic updates of birth records for all of the children fathered by these men. Also available for many interview points are direct questions that clarify the presence or absence of the mothers of these children in the household and the relationship of the mother to the father. This basic fertility and relationship information is complemented by reports from the fathers about

their own visitation patterns with absent children or the visitation patterns of absent mothers with in-residence children.

The new NLSY79 male fertility data set was created after careful evaluation of the quality of the NLSY79 male fertility records. Data were evaluated from the beginning of the survey in 1979, when the respondents were between the ages of 14 and 21 years, until 1998, when respondents were between the ages of 33 and 41 years. The review of the data reflects the best determination not only of the quality of the child birth date information, but also of the actual paternity status for all children in the file. A set of variables relating to maternal and child household and paternity transitions was created to aid in interpreting observed changes in paternity status and changes in the child's date of birth.

The male fertility data set is designed to give researchers the best possible estimate of the NLSY79 male's actual biological fertility record for the period up to the 1998 interview. By using a variety of inputs, including male respondents' household and fertility rosters with children's names, it was possible to identify individual children on a year-by-year basis, and thereby judge with some precision whether children were in fact the biological offspring of a respondent. The data set includes all NLSY79 male respondents, whether they reported a child at some point or were determined to be childless. Men who reported no children from any source were assigned "missing" values for all child variables.

The data set contains a variable reflecting the level of confidence for the biological status of each child, permitting researchers either to discard data for those children whose biological status is questionable or to examine which factors contribute to variation in biological confidence levels. The best possible estimate of each child's correct month and year of birth is given. Also, a quasi-event history of changes in the child's household status, fertility status, and date of birth is provided, as well as information as to whether the mother of the child was present in the household for the years 1979 to 1983. This information is not available in the original data set.

A set of variables allows researchers to link the male fertility data for each year

between 1984 and 1998 with the NLSY79 Children's Record Form (CRF) ID for each child. This will permit users to link the male fertility data with selected child year-specific variables in the main NLSY79 file that are not included as part of the male fertility file. To enhance the usefulness of the male fertility file, a wide range of year-specific information about children from the main NLSY79 file has already been incorporated into the male fertility file and is set up to expedite linking to the main NLSY79. To combine extracts from the two data sets, researchers simply need to merge them using the main NLSY79 identification code.

Because the data come from a longitudinal survey, they offer a unique opportunity for clarifying the magnitude of misreporting, the potential biases implied by misreports, and linkages of these misreports with a number of characteristics and behaviors of these men.

Spouse/partner identification variables in the data set permit users to define spouse/partner continuity and discontinuity across all NLSY79 survey rounds from 1979 to 2000. These variables enable users, in almost all instances, to identify whether the same or different female spouse/partners are in residence at the various survey points.

The NLSY79 male fertility file, as well as a user's guide and several papers that help clarify the data evaluation procedures and related analytical issues, may be obtained free of charge by visiting the NLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/nls> and choosing the "Ordering Data" link. Questions on the data set may be addressed to NLS User Services. (See the back of this newsletter for contact information.) □

### NLS Data Support WIC Research

The federally funded Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) aims to assist pregnant and breastfeeding women, nonbreastfeeding postpartum women, infants, and children up to 5 years of age who are low-income and nutritionally at risk. This program provides supplemental nutritious foods; nutrition education and counseling; and screening and referrals to other health, welfare, and social services.

The NLS provides many opportunities for research on the WIC program's effectiveness. The NLSY79 is unique in that researchers can find questions about WIC receipt in the main file data and can use that information in conjunction with data collected on the children of the NLSY79 respondents. Because the NLS collects data on respondent health and income, in addition to a wealth of other data, researchers may examine many different factors relating to WIC receipt. The longitudinal nature of the NLS offers the chance to review related variables over time to better determine outcomes.

Several NLS surveys have asked questions about WIC receipt. The NLSY79 asks about WIC receipt in the past calendar year by respondents, their spouses/partners, and/or their children. In addition, the NLSY79 young adults, who are the 15-year-old and older children of NLSY79 female respondents, also report on WIC benefits received.

The NLSY97 is the newest NLS cohort. This cohort is designed to be representative of the U.S. population in 1997 born during the years 1980 through 1984. WIC data for this cohort include information on WIC receipt, month and year of receipt, month and year in which receipt began and ended, who in the household is covered by the WIC program, whether there have been any months in which WIC benefits were not received, and how much the respondent or his or her spouse would pay for food received monthly through the WIC program.

Researchers interested in reviewing previously completed work on WIC using the NLS are encouraged to visit the *NLS Bibliography* on the Internet at <http://www.nlsbibliography.org>. A sampling of articles is listed below:

Kowaleski-Jones, Lori; and Duncan, Greg J. "The Effects of WIC on Children's Health and Development." *Poverty Research News* 5,2 (March-April 2001): 6-7.

Chatterji, Pinka; Bonuck, Karen; Chawan, Simi; and Nandini, Deb. "WIC Participation and the Initiation and Duration of Breastfeeding." Discussion Paper No. 1246-02. Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin-Madison (February 2002).

Institute of Medicine. "WIC Nutrition Risk Criteria: A Scientific Assessment". Washington DC: National Academy Press, 1996, Chapter 2: Poverty and Nutrition Risk. 41-51. □

### Notice about Incorrect Occupation and Industry Codes in the Mature Women and Young Women Surveys

During the process of assigning the 2000 occupation and industry (I&O) codes to the women's surveys, the Census Bureau staff discovered that some 1990 I&O codes had been assigned incorrectly in 1997 for respondents and their husbands/partners who had more than one job coded in that year. Because the same code is carried forward in years during which there are no job changes, this 1997 error could affect the 1990 I&O data in subsequent years. Researchers who are using or planning on using the 1990 I&O codes from the computer-assisted personal interview (CAPI) years at any time in the near future should contact NLS User Services for additional information. (See the back of this newsletter for contact information.) The 1990 corrections will be made available to the public as soon as processing is completed. The 2000 codes for 1995-2001 will be available shortly thereafter. □

### NLSY97 User Workshop Coming in July

A user workshop is being planned to introduce both new and experienced NLS researchers to the NLSY97 data. The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 user workshop is scheduled to take place July 21-24, 2003, at The Ohio State University in Columbus, OH. The main focus of the workshop will be school-to-work transitions. Attendees will learn to work with data from NLSY97 rounds 1 through 5. Visit the Internet site <http://www.bls.gov/nls/userconference/summer2003.htm> for more information. □

### Frequently Asked Questions

NLS User Services encourages researchers to contact them with questions and prob-

lems they have encountered while accessing and using NLS data and/or documentation. Every effort is made to answer these inquiries. Some recently asked questions that may be of general interest to NLS users are listed below with their answers.

*Q1: Is it possible to use a tagset from the last release of the NLSY79 with the newest release? I have been using the 1998 data and now want to start using the newer data, but I cannot read in my tagsets.*

A1: It is possible to update tagsets from a previous NLS release for use with the current release. Tagsets made from the 1979-1998 release have the extension name .ythpub. Just rename the extension to .NLSY79 and Investigator will recognize it for use with the 1979-2000 release.

*Q2: Is it possible for the same NLSY79 mother to have more than one young adult in the study?*

A2: All children old enough to be counted as young adults are included for interview unless there is an upper age restriction, such as no one aged 21 or older (1998 only). Multiple young adult respondents who have the same mother are eligible for interview.

*Q3: As I understand it, if there is more than one child in a family, the NLSY79 mother will have more than one ID number, depending on the child for whom they are reporting. Is this correct?*

A3: That is not correct. The mothers do not have more than one ID number. The mother ID variable does not change; it is the same ID number that is on the main file (R00001.00). The child ID is composed of the five-digit mother ID followed by another two digits indicating (for the most part, but not in all cases) birth order. For example (using fake numbers), if a mother's ID is 555 and she has three children, the first child ID will be 55501, the second child ID will be 55502, and the third child ID will be 55503. Because all children of the same mother share the same mother ID, it is the mother ID variable that links siblings together.

*Q4: I recently downloaded from your Web site a zipped file containing both the NLSY79 main file and the work history data. I have*

*been using the work history program to select a number of variables, but I have been having difficulty figuring out the exact definitions and codes for these variables. According to the NLSY79 User's Guide, descriptions and codes for the work history variables are supposed to be on the work history CD, in a file named vardscr.txt. I have looked through the files I downloaded and cannot seem to find that file anywhere. Where can I find documentation on these variables?*

A4: The user's guide was printed before we had the NLSY79 1979-2000 codebook supplement completed. Before this release, there was separate work history documentation, which included the file called vardscr.txt. For the new combined main/work history release, we have incorporated the work history documentation into the codebook supplement as appendix 18. In the "contents" window of NLS DB Investigator, you will see several items listed under "documents." One of these items is the *Codebook Supplement*. Double-click on this link to open the *Codebook Supplement* in the "text/cdbk" window. Under the table of contents, click on appendix 18, then on "Description and codes for variables in 1979-2000 NLSY79 work history data." This material replaces the old vardscr.txt file.

*Q5: I am having trouble understanding what is going on with current household members in the Mature Women and Young Women surveys from 1995 to the present. Can you help?*

A5: During the paper-and-pencil interview (PAPI) years, Census Bureau field representatives transferred information about any current household member from a paper control card onto the questionnaires. Therefore, only people currently living in the household ever appeared in the variables that went out to the public. With the onset of computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) in 1995, Census Bureau field representatives began keying the current household listing from the last interview. Because of this, some of the household members for whom data are released on the public data files may no longer be living in the household. In order to locate those people currently living in the household, you need to look at more than one variable. In 1995, use HRC-6=1 (current household member) and

HRC-8. In 1997, use CK-95MEM=1 (current) and RELATION and HRC-6=1 (current) and RELATION. IN 1999, use 99HHMEM=1 (current) and RELATION. In 2001, use CURHHMEM=1 (current) and RELATION. Please note that the relationship codes in HRC-8 are consistent with the codes used in the PAPI years. While the relationship codes are consistent from 1997 onward, they are inconsistent with the codes used in prior years. □

## Completed NLS Research

The following is a listing of recent research based on data from the NLS cohorts that has not appeared in its current form in a previous issue of the *NLS News*. See the *NLS Annotated Bibliography* on the Internet at <http://www.nlsbibliography.org> for a comprehensive listing of NLS-related research.

Amuedo-Dorantes, Catalina and Pozo, Susan. "Precautionary Saving by Young Immigrants and Young Natives." *Southern Economic Journal* 69,1 (July 2002): 48-72. [NLSY79]

Anderson, Deborah J.; Binder, Melissa; and Krause, Kate. "The Motherhood Wage Penalty: Which Mothers Pay It and Why?" *American Economic Review* 92,2 (May 2002): 354-359. [Young Women]

Brooks-Gunn, Jeanne; Han, Wen-Jui; and Waldfogel, Jane. "Maternal Employment and Child Cognitive Outcomes in the First Three Years of Life: The NICHD Study of Early Child Care." *Child Development* 73,4 (July-August 2002): 1052-1072. [Children of the NLSY79]

Gitter, Robert J. and Reagan, Patricia B. "Reservation Wages: An Analysis of the Effects of Reservations on Employment of American Indian Men." *American Economic Review* 92,4 (September 2002): 1160-1168. [NLSY79]

Goldsmith, Arthur H. and Veum, Jonathan R. "Wages and the Composition of Experience." *Southern Economic Journal* 69,2 (October 2002): 429-445. [NLSY79]

Grossman, Michael; Kaestner, Robert; and Markowitz, Sara. "Get High and Get Stu-

pid: The Effect of Alcohol and Marijuana Use on Teen Sexual Behavior." Working Paper No. 9216, National Bureau of Economic Research, September 2002. [NLSY97]

Hamermesh, Daniel S. "12 Million Salaried Workers Are Missing." *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 55,4 (July 2002): 649-666. [Mature Women, Older Men, Young Men, Young Women]

Hazarika, Gautam. "The Role of Credit Constraints in the Cyclicalities of College Enrollments." *Education Economics* 10,2 (August 2002): 133-144. [NLSY79]

Kahn, Robert S. "Paper Raises at Least Three Concerns." *British Medical Journal* 324,7345 (May 2002): 1097. [NLSY79]

Kerr, William C.; Fillmore, Kaye Middleton; and Bostrom, Alan. "Stability of Alcohol Consumption over Time: Evidence from Three Longitudinal Surveys from the United States." *Journal of Studies on Alcohol* 63,3 (May 2002): 325-333. [NLSY79]

Lerman, Robert I. "Married and Unmarried Parenthood and Economic Wellbeing: A Dynamic Analysis of a Recent Cohort." Report prepared for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, July 2002. [NLSY79]

McTigue, Kathleen M.; Garrett, Joanne M.; and Popkin, Barry M. "The Natural History of the Development of Obesity in a Cohort of Young US Adults Between 1981 and 1998." *Annals of Internal Medicine* 136,12 (June 18, 2002): 857-864. [NLSY79]

Michael, Robert T. "Children's Cognitive Skill Development in Britain and the United States." Working Paper No. 01-19, The Harris School of Public Policy Studies, The University of Chicago, 2001. [Children of the NLSY79]

Neal, Derek A. "The Measured Black-White Wage Gap among Women Is Too Small." Working Paper No. 9133, National Bureau of Economic Research, September 2002. [NLSY79]

O'Rand, Angela M. and Farkas, Janice I. "Couples' Retirement Timing in the United

States in the 1990s." *International Journal of Sociology* 32,2 (Summer 2002): 11-29. [Mature Women]

Phipps, Shelley. "Values, Policies and the Well-Being of Young Children: A Comparison of Canada, Norway and the United States." In *Child Well-Being, Child Poverty and Child Policy in Modern Nations: What Do We Know?* K. Vleminckx and T. M. Smeeding, eds., The Policy Press, 2001. [Children of the NLSY79]

Rich, Lauren M. and Kim, Sun-Bin. "Employment and the Sexual and Reproductive Behavior of Female Adolescents." *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health* 34,3 (May-June 2002): 127-134. [NLSY79]

Rodgers, William M. III and Spriggs, William E. "Accounting for the Racial Gap in AFQT Scores: Comment." *Industrial & Labor Relations Review* 55,3 (April 2002): 533-542. [NLSY79]

U.S. General Accounting Office. "Child Labor: Labor Can Strengthen Its Efforts to Protect Children Who Work." Washington DC: GAO-02-880. Report to the Chairman, Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. Senate, September 2002. Also: <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d02880.pdf> [NLSY97]

Van Den Oord, Edwin. "Estimating Effects of Latent and Measured Genotypes in Multilevel Models." *Statistical Methods in Medical Research* 10,6 (December 2001): 393-407. [Children of the NLSY79]

Wight, Richard G.; Aneshensel, Carol S.; and Seeman, Teresa E. "Educational Attainment, Continued Learning Experience, and Cognitive Function among Older Men." *Journal of Aging and Health* 14,2 (May 2002): 211-236. [Older Men]

Zagorsky, Jay L. "Wealth, Mobility and Race: A Longitudinal Study of U.S. Young Baby Boomers." *Economic Mobility in America and Other Advanced Countries*, Levy Economics Institute Conference. NY: Blithewood Annandale-on-the-Hudson, October 2002. Also: [http://www.levy.org/mobility/papers/ses5\\_10.pdf](http://www.levy.org/mobility/papers/ses5_10.pdf) [NLSY79] □

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